

EDITORIAL.

It is probably true that never in the history of botany has the development of our knowledge advanced at such a rapid rate as now. Investigations have multiplied so enormously and technique is becoming daily so much more refined that facts are coming to light too rapidly to classify. This state of affairs has brought upon us a period of hasty and broad generalization that is to be deplored. The only useful function of generalization is to suggest lines of further inquiry, and broad generalization is never so much out of place as when facts are coming in rapidly. It seems impossible now to write a book upon any general subject in botany which is not antiquated in some parts before it reaches our shelves. Especially is this true in reference to generalizations concerning phylogeny. Treub's discovery of the so-called chalazal entrance of the pollen-tube in *Casuarina* no sooner lays the foundation of a reconstructed scheme of classification, current long enough to be followed in other publications, than two other observers announce the same condition of things in *Amentiferae*. The immense importance of the development and form of the archesporium is no sooner embalmed in books that have appeared and have been announced than Strasburger transfers the "developmental center of gravity" to the mother-cells, and opens up a vast field of new inquiry in the numerical relations of chromosomes. The boundary line between gametophyte and sporophyte is no sooner well established in our texts and minds and generalizations, than it is shifted. Examples might be multiplied on every hand, and they serve to emphasize the point we intend to make, namely, that only such generalization as suggests further investigation is to be thought of at such a time as this, and that broad generalizations leading to extensive reconstruction of views are worse than useless. The record of facts, the stringing of these facts upon some consistent thread of theory, are now and always must be necessary, but the constant reconstruction of phylogenies is surely as unprofitable as it may be misleading.

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IT IS IN ORDER for the resuscitators of *Science* (which we are glad to greet again), to rise and explain to the botanists whose support they seek, why phanerogamic taxonomy only should be represented in the editorial committee while five specialists are considered necessary for proper presentation of zoological matters.